State government going 'live' Oct. 1

The state government side of ConnectND is poised to "go live" Oct. 1 with PeopleSoft financial systems. Those functions include asset management, accounts receivable and billing, accounts payable, general ledger, inventory management, purchasing and projects.

The finance portal becomes available Oct. 1 to state Finance users. Labor redistribution rolls out during October with payments to be made in November. Employee expenses software will be available to the pilot agencies starting October 1 and provided statewide later.

With formal training completed, state government offered two-hour workshops on deposits, interdepartmental billings, vouchers and projects during the week of Sept. 13-24 so agencies could use a computer lab to practice for go-live.

State Human Resource Management Systems went live in August with its benefits administration functions. Pilot agencies began using recruit workforce and training administration software in July. No target date has been set for extending those functions to all agencies. The Office of Management and Budget will begin using PeopleSoft budget and strategic sourcing software in December.

Grants, contracts system now NDUS major focus

Development, configuration, testing and refinement of the complex grants and contracts systems—that's the important work in progress leading up to Jan. 1 implementation of ConnectND's Finance and Human Resource Management Systems on the four remaining North Dakota University System campuses.

Interactive reviews of the University of Florida and Florida State University implementations of PeopleSoft grants and contracts systems, conducted at the request of Chancellor Robert Potts, have helped resolve questions and validate the work being done. Two consultants who helped with the recent Florida implementations are providing their grants and contracts expertise to the North Dakota project. They are guiding and assisting project and campus personnel, led by David Schmidt of the University of North Dakota and Karen Hendrickson of North Dakota State University, and representatives of Maximus.

Grants and contracts is also under direct scrutiny of the

Campus personnel joined project staff during the first of three testing cycles for the ConnectND grants and contracts systems and processes. Left to right are Jonelle Watson, Minot State University; David Schmidt, grants and contracts module lead; Nyra Thornton, North Dakota State University; Celia Gravely, Huron Consulting Group; and Sally Horner, University of North Dakota. In the background, her face, hidden by the computer monitor, is Val Kettner, NDSU.

Implementation begins on 'final four'

A major piece of ConnectND is in operation on the "final four," the campuses where full implementation has been delayed. PeopleSoft undergraduate admissions and recruitment functions were activated at Minot State University and MSU-Bottineau on Sept. 7. North Dakota State University and the University of North Dakota "went live" with admissions and recruitment the following week.

A few issues were resolved during the process and now admissions and recruitment personnel at those four schools are entering applications with PeopleSoft, admitting students, running letters, generating envelopes, assigning and manage checklists and running queries. Thus, PeopleSoft software is now in use on all 11 campuses. Graduate school, law school and medical school admissions and recruitment functions will be phased in later.

Student records and financial aid systems at the final four will follow, in January/February; then student financial functions next summer.

Finance and Human Resource Management Systems are aiming at a Jan. 1, 2005, implementation for the final four, joining the seven schools already using those functions.

Grants—*Continued from page 1*

higher education Executive Steering Committee, chaired by Dickinson State University President Lee Vickers. Two committee members, Alice Brekke of UND and Jean Ostrom-Blonigen, NDSU, are coordinating the

communication of progress on grants and contracts to the steering committee and the campus implementation team chairs.

Each of three testing cycles in September, October and November provides an opportunity for status evaluation, identification of gaps, and re-tooling, as necessary. The monitoring process will include detailed readiness reports from each of the four campuses.

The project team, consultants and campuses are working together to meet the implementation deadline set by the Board of Higher Education. Project managers are confident the remaining four campuses will go live as scheduled.

Current status of ConnectND

Oversight reports are on the ConnectND Web site. The 9-17- 04 report codes overall project status as "yellow/green." Yellow indicates "good probability" of meeting dates and acceptable quality; green indicates "strong probability." The report expresses concern about the departure of higher education Human Resource Management System project staff; however, steps have been subsequently been taken to fill that gap.

System performance problems not related to software

With seven campuses using ConnectND, moderate performance problems took the student production system down periodically during the first week of classes. Those performance problems were related to the network and hardware configuration, not to the PeopleSoft software.

The data center in Grand Forks had been battling that issue and, with help from a PeopleSoft consultant, was finally able to resolve it on the first Thursday of classes. The performance problems generated significant concern from campuses and students, but reports have been far more positive since the situation has been corrected.

"As in the past, we will have intermittent performance problems or scheduled events that will periodically cause short delays in accessing the system," Grant Crawford, NDUS chief information officer and project director, told the Legislature's interim Information Technology Committee. "These will continue to be limited as much as possible."

With ConnectND now live on seven campuses, early semester examples of progress included:
- Successful distribution or more than $15 million in financial aid at the pilot site campuses.
- Production of the necessary third-week enrollment reports.
- Processing of a full payroll, which included the returning faculty members and student employees.

Reports capture totals, tweaking provides consistency

The PeopleSoft software functioned as designed to produce the third week enrollment reports, says Scott Mahar, Student Administration project manager. Consolidated Academic Statistics selected the statistical snapshot population flawlessly. Students who should be included in that snapshot were in the snapshot.

"However, a couple of things needed some tweaking in our third week reporting bundle that are not PeopleSoft delivered reports," Mahar said. "First-time freshmen numbers are inconsistent between reports because programmers, independent of each other, used different fields to create the reporting sample. This has been modified and the reports in question have been rerun."

Mahar noted that the inconsistencies were minor and programming staffs are working resolutely to achieve consistency. "They have been learning the complexities of this system and have done a remarkable job producing the reports that make up the third week bundle," he explained. "But there are unique characteristics of the data fields in this new system that can be misleading. New systems, new data elements, new definitions of old values and new integration between modules have further complicated their task to replicate the census reporting."

Mahar added that conversions to new systems are never perfectly accomplished and the achievements attained so far are monumental for a software project of this size. "As with the legacy system, we will continue to refine the reports over time," he said. "As users refine business processes we will make the necessary changes to ensure reporting of accurate and complete information."

The fall enrollment reports, which for all seven "live" campuses were taken from PeopleSoft, make up one part of the Student Administration IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) information. The other parts are Right to Know reporting, taken for all campuses from the old system; and Degree Completers, taken for Mayville State and Valley City State universities from PeopleSoft, and for the remaining five live campuses from the old system.

PeopleSoft still battling Oracle bid

Although a federal judge ruled Oracle Corporation's $7.7-billion hostile takeover bid doesn't violate antitrust laws, PeopleSoft says that doesn't mean the move will succeed. In an e-mail, PeopleSoft President Craig Conway outlined significant remaining issues:

- The Justice Department has 60 days to appeal. The appeals court can affirm the lower court's ruling, reverse it, or send the case back for additional proceedings.
- The European Commission review continues under European antitrust law.
- The tender offer can't be completed unless PeopleSoft's shareholders rights plan ("poison pill") is eliminated. As it has all along, the board will continue exercising its fiduciary responsibility in determining what is in the best interests of our stockholders.
- Oracle could wage a proxy fight at next year's annual meeting. This year, Oracle nominated, then withdrew nominees and PeopleSoft's board members were re-elected by approximately 95 percent of the vote.
- PeopleSoft's lawsuit against Oracle is scheduled for trial Nov. 1, 2004. PeopleSoft believes it can prove to a jury that Oracle intentionally engaged in unfair business practices, including a deliberate campaign to mislead customers and prospects, and disrupt business. PeopleSoft is seeking compensatory damages of more than $1 billion plus punitive damages, as well as an injunction to stop Oracle's bid.

Conway concluded: "I want you to know that our dedication to our customers has never wavered during the past 15 months...PeopleSoft remains focused on doing what we do best—delivering innovative solutions and the highest levels of customer service in the industry."

Words & acronyms

ERP— "Enterprise Resource Planning" System or "Enterprise Resource Package." Essentially, it means an administrative software system that covers the entire enterprise – from students to employees to financial management. While our current administrative systems (commonly known as SAMIS or CICS) were developed long before "ERP" was even thought of, they are essentially our ERP today.

Legacy System—An application in which a company or organization has previously already invested considerable time and money. Examples of legacy systems to be replaced by ConnectND are CICS (used by NDUS staff), ALFI (used by students) and SAMIS (used in state government).

MAXIMUS— Founded in 1975, serves as the implementation partner on the Connect North Dakota Project, and will be responsible for developing an implementation and deployment plan that addresses the major business areas, key agency and campus participants and critical project completion dates.

PeopleSoft— Founded in the mid-1980s, this company builds applications on a client-server platform instead of using the traditional mainframe. This product should provide both the state and the university system with the ability to operate within a real-time environment on a system-wide basis.

WebEX—A licensed program for interactive communication over the World Wide Web and telephone. Sessions can be recorded and archived.

Web-streamed—Recorded live and broadcast real-time via the Internet to those who cannot be at the event location.

About ConnectND

What is ConnectND?

The CONNECT ND project is the implementation of *PeopleSoft's* ERP system that will replace North Dakota's current administrative computer systems. The ERP system will serve as the administrative systems for the entire enterprise – from students to employees to financial management.

Who is involved in ConnectND?

All of North Dakota State Government, including the North Dakota University System, is involved in this project.

How is the ConnectND project organized?

The project has been organized by module (functional area) into three state groups (Financial, Human Resources Management System, and Technical) and four higher education groups (Financial, Human Resources Management System, Student Administration, and Technical).

Fyi & updates

Information available from training Web site

The University System Training and Documentation Web site http://www.und.edu/dept/cndtrain/ hosts printed instructions and demonstrations about the NDUS ConnectND Student Administration, Finance and Human Resource Management systems.

A variety of informational and training material is accessible for students, faculty and staff. Added to the site recently were Finance procurement and general ledger training documents.

NDUS Help Desk processes 'tickets'

NDUS Help Desk activity has declined after peaking with the beginning of classes. More recently, during the Sept. 17-23 week, 351 new tickets were opened, an average of 50 per day. Throughout that period, 375 tickets were resolved—of those, 59 percent within 24 hours, 26 percent in one to five days, and 15 percent in six days or more. Of the phone calls (excluding Web, e-mail and walk-up), 78 percent were resolved on first contact by the Help Desk. Unresolved tickets averaged 183 per day. (Figures rounded).

Links mentioned

• **Calendar:** http://www.nodak.edu/connectnd/calendar/index.php?action=show_month&month

• **Connect ND:** www.nodak.edu/connectnd

• **MAXIMUS:** www.maximus.com

• **North Dakota University System:** www.ndus.nodak.edu

• **PeopleSoft:** www.peoplesoft.com

• **State of North Dakota:** www.discovernd.com/

Comments and suggestions regarding this publication are welcome. We encourage questions about this newsletter or the project. To facilitate this process, you may ask a question electronically through the Web site FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) section. It's also a place to view the questions others have asked and the responses of the project teams.

CONNECT ND e bulletin

More information, questions or comments: www.nodak.edu/connectnd
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